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## Press Releases

### DNA breakthrough by The Forensic Science Service helps trap rapist

Rapist Russell Bradbury was today sentenced to six and a half years in prison for an attack from 20 years ago, after The Forensic Science Service used pioneering DNA technology to help Northumbria Police identify him.

Familial searching, developed by the FSS, is the only technology of its kind in the world. This is the first time it has been used in Northumbria to track down an offender.

Familial searching can be used where a DNA profile has been obtained from a crime scene, but there is no match with a person on The National DNA Database. It looks for individuals on the database who have similar DNA profiles, and who may be relatives of the offender, providing vital intelligence for police.

In this case, scientists from the Forensic Science Service worked with police officers from Northumbria reviewing the unsolved rape case from 1986. Scientists identified and retrieved a microscope slide meticulously retained from the case. They then applied the powerful DNA technique Low Copy Number to obtain a DNA profile. Familial searching on this DNA profile provided a line of enquiry which led police to Bradbury.

Cathy Turner from the FSS said: "Familial searching is one of the latest techniques in a range of new DNA technology developed by the FSS. Other developments include Low Copy Number DNA, which can obtain a DNA profile from just a few cells, such as where someone has touched a drinking glass, and DNABOOST, which can help separate out mixed samples of DNA. We work with police forces - through the nationally funded Home Office programme Operation Advance - to ensure that all of these new breakthroughs can be applied to old, unsolved cases, some dating back many decades.

"It is very satisfying when we are able to use new technology to help police solve a case from such a long time ago, which pre-dated DNA profiling. This case occurred nearly a decade before the creation of the National DNA Database, which the FSS conceived and developed in 1995, and now runs under contract to the Home Office."

**For more information on familial searching and other breakthroughs, please contact Cathy Lee at the FSS press office on 0121 329 5225.**

**For further information about the case, please contact Northumbria Police press office on 01661 868 888. (Russell Bradbury is originally from North Tyneside, but had since moved to the Manchester area.)**

**For more information about The National DNA Database, and about Operation Advance, which is a national programme of support for unsolved serious crimes, please contact the Home Office press office on 0207 035 3535.**

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